Parkside House ICT and Computing Functional Skills KS4 Core Elements Year 1

Term 1: Core Skills and Knowledge

Foundation Unit

This unit establishes that the students have learnt basic requirements for understanding how a computer system and how to use a computer safely before beginning the skills based practical sections of the course. Pupils revise the need to keep their work and accounts secure by using memorable and complex passwords, the dangers of computer viruses and how to avoid them. They are taught how to choose the correct software for a task i.e. Excel for modelling or Word for a business letter. They are also made aware of the importance of good file and folder organisation in producing evidence for the Functional Skills exam or Entry Level portfolio, how to capture screen shots of their work and import them into other MS Office applications and the absolute necessity of the clear and sensible naming of documents for examination purpose.

Searching the Internet for Information

At the beginning of the Functional Skills exam students are always asked to search for some information that they will use later. After a brief overview of the nature of the Internet, the students look at the common features of popular browsers i.e. the address bar, what is an URL, Search History and browser extensions like adblockers. They move on learning about using search engines, how the Google engines uses algorithms to speed up searches, the effective use of keywords and omitting irrelevant words found in Stop lists. Information found is tested for Reliability, Currency, Relevance and Bias.

Term 2: Electronic Communication and Word Processing 1

Electronic Communication

Students practice the core skills of sending and receiving emails using MS Outlook. They are made aware of other applications i.e. Thunderbird, Gmail and exam the differences between SMS/MMS texting, social media posting and business use of email for promotion, information, data collection and the unethical use of email in phishing and virus dissemination. Students learn how to organise an inbox by using Filters, Folders and Rules. They practise how to create contacts in Outlook, and to generate mailing lists. For the practical exam, students are taught how to attach picture and documents to an email, the differences between CC and BCC and the conventions of subject titles, salutations and address formats.

Word Processing 1

This section consolidates and builds on skills learnt in Key Stage 3 and give students who may have missed some of those core skills the opportunity to fill in gaps in their knowledge necessary for exam tasks such as letter writing. They learn through a series of practical tasks how to format text, altering text size, font, and alignment, and revise short-cut keys such as Ctrl+C for copy that will save them time in the exam. Most students progress to formatting whole documents, changing margins, page orientation, background colours and margins to improve and customise the appearance of their work.

Term 3: Word Processing 2 Advanced Skills (Tables and Multi-Application in Graphics) and Practical Tasks

Students are taught how to present images, text and numbers in table/grid format. This required for Section B of the examination where data can either be given at Level 1 or sourced at Level 2 using the criteria for reliable data studied in the *Searching for Information* unit earlier in the course. Tables can either be inserted using the Grid tool or drawn/edited using the Draw Grid pen. Changing borders, text format, fill colours and patterns are used to improve the look and readability of tabulated data. This section then revises how to import images into Word, how to size, rotate, crop and position pictures on a page moving on to building on graphics skills learnt in *Composite* Images and *Faking IT* units at Key stage 3 by combining images edited in third party applications such as Paint.NET or online applications e.g. Pixlr. Pupils are also shown how to create simple .BMP graphics in MS Paint, and use Autoshapes to generate diagrams and graphics in Word. Issues of copyright ownership and legal use are also investigated to make pupils aware of the laws that govern the use of third party data and the ethical issues of plagiarism and intellectual copyright.

Pupils are given a series of practical tasks to develop and extend their skills including creating:

- A simple leaflet using an MS Word template
- A camera shop logo using Autoshapes
- A poster for a firework display with predefined text and images
- A newsletter for business, organisation or event